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**Employee Profile: Michael Cornwall – man of many interests**

**Q: What's your name and job title?**

**A:** Michael Cornwall. I have a number of job titles. They are executive staff adviser to the commissioner, chief of staff for Medicaid, schlepper, Johnny-on-the-Spot, Man Friday, Man Monday through Friday, and faithful manservant to the commissioner.

**Q: How does your job allow you to impact the lives of your fellow Kentuckians?**

**A:** Kentucky Medicaid's mission is to provide innovative opportunities to our members that will promote healthy lifestyles, personal accountability and responsible fiscal practices. I impact the lives of my fellow Kentuckians by helping to accomplish that mission! By addressing Kentucky Medicaid's weaknesses, in a way that does not point fingers of blame but, instead, focuses on solutions, I can honestly say that what was a failing health care program is now a program full of potential and promise. How do I impact the lives of my fellow Kentuckians? By helping to sustain Kentucky Medicaid for generations to come. In addition, I have an interest in social policy as it relates to the practice of mental health services in Kentucky. I follow these issues and comment on them as they arise. From my vantage point in state government, I have the unique position to see policy change from its inception and can contribute to its development.

**Q: What's the best part of your job?**

**A:** The best part of my job is working for one of the most talented women in state government. In my 14 years of service, I have not enjoyed such professional companionship. Shannon Turner provides me with a wealth of innovative and insightful advice and guidance, making her, in my opinion, an inimitable Medicaid commissioner.

**Q: Please tell us about your educational background, including educational degrees and why you have pursued them.**

**A:** I have a bachelor's degree in English syntax, a master's degree in counseling psychology, a master's degree in social work, a doctor's degree in psychology and I am now

working on completing a doctor's degree in health and behavioral medicine. I have a license and certification in social work and a license in clinical mental health counseling. I am a board certified mental health counselor and hold certification in rational emotive behavioral therapy. I actually wanted to be a dentist when I was a child. After that, I planned to be an attorney, but my life didn't follow that path. After joining the U.S. Air Force, I found my interests were in writing. So I pursued a degree

in that area and worked as a freelance journalist for five years. Then I took a job with McGraw-Hill and started a career. Before long, I was working in an area that I had not expected, but was well-entrenched. Ever on a journey to learn more about myself and others, I took the degrees in counseling, social work and psychology. Now I am overwhelmed with interest in health and disease management, so I am pursuing a doctor's degree in health. I think I am getting closer to my true goal of becoming a dentist. But I am considering law school next.



*Photo by Robert G. Martin*

**Michael Cornwall, executive staff adviser to Medicaid Commissioner Shannon Turner pauses during a recent conversation in his 6<sup>th</sup>-floor office.**

**Q: What activities/hobbies do you participate in outside of work?**

**How long have you done these activities and what benefits do you get from them?**

**A:** Well, I run six miles a day; participate in Pilates and kickboxing twice a week, and do a lot of bike riding. I am a Ph.D. student as well, so that takes up a lot of time – writing and reading. I also teach mental health administration and juvenile interventions at a local college. I don't think I have ever not run every day. I started running in high school and just made it a part of my life. I have been involved with Pilates and kickboxing for three years and I am getting certified to teach these classes. I am also a certified master gardener, so I do a lot of that during the spring and summer months. I like to take long distance bike rides. The last one I took was 350 miles through the Loire Valley in southern France. I am planning a 400-mile ride through Ireland this spring.

**Q: Name one thing you simply could not live without if stranded on a desert island.**

**A:** Hmm . . . I think it would be books. I read a lot. I love to read 14th, 15th, 16th, and 17th century history – especially the period between Henry VII and Charles II of England. I know that I could live without anything that I didn't have, but books would be something I would have to have in order to be totally content while I waited to be rescued.

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We want to know about you – in your own words! The CHFS Employee Profile has been revamped in a question-and-answer format. Any CHFS employee is eligible to participate. E-mail CHFS Focus Editor Emily Moses Mandell ([emily.moses@ky.gov](mailto:emily.moses@ky.gov)) and she will send you a short questionnaire. All we ask is that you send the form back promptly. If you work in the CHR building, we'll take your picture. If you work in the field, we ask that you e-mail a photo along with the form. We look forward to your response!

## **Convention paints picture of potential pandemic impact**

*By Emily Moses Mandell*

Few words of encouragement were spoken at a recent conference that delved into the possibilities of how the state and nation would be changed if hit by pandemic influenza.

"The threat of an influenza pandemic is one of the most important threats we face today," Alex Azar, deputy secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, said. "Pandemics do happen. And we're overdue and underprepared."

Kentucky Prepares: Kentucky's Pandemic Readiness and Emergency Planning conference was Jan. 20 at the Frankfort Convention Center, and drew a crowd of nearly 600 health and preparedness officials and employees from across the state.



Much has been made this year about the threat of Avian Influenza, most commonly known as the bird flu, as the infection of poultry with the H5N1 virus has rapidly increased throughout Southeast Asia.

While the bird flu occurs naturally in poultry, public health officials fear it could mutate to a new flu virus that spreads easily from person to person. Because infections to new

human flu strains can't be prevented by the annual flu vaccine, no one will be immune to the virus.

Azar and a host of other health experts from the state and national levels seized the opportunity to spread the word about pandemic flu and its possible effects.

Azar stressed the importance of having individual state and community preparedness plans in place to help combat a pandemic.

If a pandemic hit, the federal government would not be able to offer a lifeline to the states, said Azar.

Perhaps the only good news of the day came at the end of Azar's speech, when he recognized the state for having a tentative plan in place to deal with a pandemic.

"The state of Kentucky has given more thought to your plan (than others)," he said. "You should be commended."

Julie Geberding, M.D., director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said the CDC is keeping a close eye on the evolution of the H5N1 virus.

Geberding said the government currently is committed to "quenching" bird flu outbreaks at their source and keeping the bird flu out of the United States.

To prepare for a pandemic, she said, it is of utmost importance to have an adequate stockpile of anti-viral medications, as well as the capabilities to produce those anti-virals domestically.

In closing, Geberding reiterated the sentiments of Azar, saying preparedness is at the heart of the situation.

"Preparedness at its heart is really a local phenomenon," said Geberding. "Our situation now is advancing preparedness."

That has been the mission of the Kentucky Department for Public Health.

William D. Hacker, M.D., commissioner of the Department for Public Health, said spreading the word about pandemic preparedness to every crevice of Kentucky is paramount to preserving our way of life.

To do so most effectively, "we'd like to see our health departments sponsor mini summits," Hacker said.

A flu pandemic has the possibility to change the face of our society as we know it, having devastating impacts on education, economy, technology, health care and business.

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The characteristics of a pandemic are frightening. Global spread is inevitable. Health care systems are overloaded and unable to cope. Medical supplies are inadequate. Millions of people could die.

The message that should resound in the general public is a simple but serious one.

"Don't panic; but do get prepared," said Hacker.

For more information about making your own plan for pandemic preparedness, and a copy of Hacker's presentation, visit DPH's pandemic influenza Web site at <http://chfs.ky.gov/dph/epi/preparedness/pandemicinfluenza.htm>

For more information, visit: [www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov)

## **E-Health official lauds Kentucky's efforts**

*By Beth Crace*

Another Health and Human Services official made a stop in Frankfort to discuss the latest initiatives and developments and the rapidly changing world known as electronic health.

David Brailer, M.D., Ph.D., who serves as the national health information technology coordinator for the U.S. Department for Health and Human Services (HHS), addressed members of the e-Health Network Board during their regularly scheduled meeting on Jan. 24. He also met with Governor Ernie Fletcher and Cabinet for Health and Family Services Secretary Mark Birdwhistell during his visit.



**Dr. David Brailer**

Brailer shared his enthusiasm and optimism for the possibilities for e-Health, and told the group he believes smaller, rural states like Kentucky can play a more integral role in its development than their more urban counterparts. He also lauded Kentucky's e-Health Network Board for being quick to take the lead in this endeavor.

"You beat us to the punch," said Brailer, making reference to a newly formed federal board. "You were formed and had your first meeting before we started our group."

He also discussed, among other topics, recent lessons learned from health information technology projects

developed in the wake of Hurricane Katrina that could be applied on a state or national level.

Brailer was appointed as the first national health information technology coordinator in May. In this role, he is charged with overseeing the widespread deployment of health information technology within 10 years.

Similarly, Kentucky's e-Health Network Board was created to implement and oversee a statewide electronic health network to improve the state's system of health care delivery and administration. Governor Fletcher appointed members to the 22-member board after the 2005 General Assembly.

An e-Health network could improve patient privacy, reduce medical errors, lower administrative costs and help make electronic medical records available to more Kentuckians.

Before his appointment with HHS, Brailer was a senior fellow at the Health Technology Center in San Francisco, a non-profit research and education organization that provides information and resources to health care organizations about the future impact of technology in health care delivery. He holds degrees in medicine and economics.

## **Three counties shifting to new DCBS region**

*By Anya Armes Weber*

The Department for Community Based Services regional map looks a bit different this year, as three counties have moved from one region to a neighboring one.

Anderson, Franklin and Woodford counties have moved from Bluegrass Rural to the KIPDA Rural Service Region.

This leaves Bluegrass Rural with 13 counties and gives KIPDA Rural, led by Service Region Administrator Renee Sartin, a new total of nine.

DCBS Commissioner Tom Emberton Jr. said the change, made official Jan. 16 by administrative order, is driven by customer service.

"It's another facet of the overall DCBS modernization," Emberton said. "Part of that is to employ sound business practices. Having identified inequities of caseloads and staffing, we needed to create more of a balance. With this shift, we will be evening things out."

Emberton said Sartin and Bluegrass Rural SRA Gina Oney have been supportive of the change.



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Sartin said she wasn't surprised of the shift, something that officials have considered for years.

With three more counties, KIPDA Rural will "need more support staff to continue to provide quality services to our citizens in the entire region," she said.

Another crucial goal is to fill the region's Protection and Permanency Service Region Area Associate position and several front-line vacancies.

Sartin said even with the personnel deficit, she and her staff are ready for the change.

"The workload has been and will be overwhelming for everyone until we fill our vacancies, but I have some dedicated, hardworking staff members whom I am so proud of," she said. "They make sure that everything gets done before the day is over."

Sartin said her regional office staff has met with supervisors and other personnel in all three new counties.

"We introduced ourselves to county staff and basically opened up the doors of communication in hopes of giving them a level of comfort," Sartin said. "This is important because everyone does not like change."

Check out the new DCBS regional map at <http://chfs.ky.gov/dcbs/Service+Regions/>.

## **Participate in National Wear Red Day on Friday**

*By Brian Boisseau*

February is Heart Month, and Friday, Feb. 3, is National Wear Red Day — a day when Americans nationwide will take women's health to heart by wearing red to show support for women's heart disease awareness.

In Kentucky, more women die each year from heart disease than men. Also, more women die of heart disease than all cancers combined. Yet only 20 percent of women identify heart disease as the greatest health problem facing women today and most fail to make the connection between its risk factors and their personal risk of developing heart disease.

On National Wear Red Day, women and men across the country will wear red to unite in the national movement to give women a personal and urgent wake-up call about their risk of heart disease. Everyone can participate by showing off a favorite red dress, shirt, tie, or by wearing the Red Dress Pin, available at [www.hearttruth.gov](http://www.hearttruth.gov).

Join this effort by wearing red Feb. 3, and encourage your family, friends and co-workers to do the same.

By participating in National Wear Red Day, the Cabinet for Health and Family Services is joining The Heart Truth.

The Heart Truth is a national awareness campaign to alert women about their risk for heart disease and motivate them to take steps to lower their risk. The centerpiece of the campaign is the Red Dress — the national symbol for women and heart disease awareness. What's a Red Dress got to do with it? A simple Red Dress works as a visual red alert to get the message heard loud and clear: "Heart Disease Doesn't Care What You Wear — It's the No. 1 Killer of Women."

Sponsored by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, part of the National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the campaign is reaching women with important heart health messages in community settings through a diverse network of national and grassroots partner organizations.

Please join in and help spread the word about women and heart disease. For ideas and tools to help you participate in National Wear Red Day or to order a Red Dress Pin, visit [www.hearttruth.gov](http://www.hearttruth.gov).

## **OHRM develops checklists for supervisors**

The Office of Human Resource Management has developed two new procedures' checklists to help supervisors with entering and exiting employees.

The "Cabinet for Health and Family Services Procedures Prior to Starting a New Employee" checklist is designed to assist supervisors in securing the necessary resources before a new employee shows up for work. These procedures apply to all Frankfort-based employees, but it may be helpful for offices outside of the Frankfort area in determining needs before a new employee starts to work. This checklist does not need to be submitted, but rather should serve as an informational tool for the supervisor.

In addition, the "CHFS Supervisor Clearance/Checklist/Transition for Exiting Employees" has been developed to ensure compliance with Cabinet protocols, at the same time ensuring an easier transition until another employee can assume the job duties. Effective immediately, this checklist will be required for all exiting employees, and will become part of their personnel file.

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This will ensure accountability of state property and resources, assist supervisors with securing important documents, and re-emphasize the requirements of the employee evaluation system as well as encouraging the completion of the exit interview questionnaire. Both of these checklists can be accessed from the OHRM intranet site at <http://chfsnet.ky.gov/afa/ohrm/>.

## **OHRM Announces Revised Selection Process Guidelines**

The Office of Human Resource Management is introducing new and improved selection process guidelines. These processes serve as a guide for CHFS agencies to follow when interviewing and recommending candidates to state government positions in accordance with personnel rules and regulations.

A few highlights of the revised selection process guidelines include a step-by-step supervisor's guide, user-friendly worksheets and forms with helpful links, sample letters, and easy-to-follow instructions.

In addition, please note the following:

A new Conflict of Interest Statement that each interview panel member will be required to sign.

A revision of the Selection Worksheet requiring the interview panel to indicate which candidate is being recommended.

A clarification of reference checks to include only the recommended candidate.

A clarification to the Internal Mobility form requiring employees to list all previous disciplinary action, and any written reprimands within the last two years.

A change from three years to five years for which the selection documentation materials must be retained.

The revised selection process (formerly titled Hiring and Selection Process) is now included in the CHFS Personnel Management Training for Supervisors curriculum. Review the revised guidelines on the OHRM intranet site at <http://chfsnet.ky.gov/afa/ohrm/hire.htm>.

Please start using the updated instructions and forms immediately. If you have already completed the selection process using old forms, you do not need to redo them for submission to the Division of Personnel Administration.

If you have any questions, please contact the personnel branch manager or personnel administrator assigned to your office/department.

## **Employee Enrichment**

*By Anya Armes Weber*

*Employee Enrichment is a weekly feature for CHFS staff. These tips for making work better focus on team building, customer service and personal development.*

"Silent gratitude isn't very much use to anyone." - Gertrude Stein



A thank you to someone who's helped you – even with the simplest of gestures – can be so meaningful. When people feel their contributions have made a difference, they are more likely to continue their helpful efforts. Even a belated "thank you" shows you haven't forgotten someone's good deed and that it means something to you.

Expressing your appreciation is thoughtful, and it conveys your good manners.